

Amendment No. 3 to HB0615

Sexton J
Signature of Sponsor

AMEND Senate Bill No. 1108

House Bill No. 615*

by deleting all language after the caption and substituting instead the following:

WHEREAS, the Holy Bible has great historical and cultural significance in the State of Tennessee as a record of the history of Tennessee families that predates some modern vital statistical records; and

WHEREAS, according to the Secretary of State, before the 20th century Tennessee and many other states did not keep comprehensive records of births, marriages, and deaths; and

WHEREAS, families recorded their own vital records in family Bibles that were passed down through the generations; and

WHEREAS, because these Bibles contain a history of Tennessee families that may not be found otherwise, the Tennessee State Library and Archives holds hundreds of family Bible records in several formats and within many collections; and

WHEREAS, the Tennessee State Library and Archives Bible collection contains Bibles with records dated between the late 18th century and the early 20th century, including those of many prominent Tennessee families; and

WHEREAS, Secretary of State Tre Hargett has said in connection with these Bible collections: "I am thrilled that the State Library and Archives and our volunteers have worked to make these resources accessible to all Tennesseans. The information recorded in TSLA's collection of Bible records is not only helpful for genealogy, but also a wonderful display of history at a very personal level"; and

WHEREAS, printing the Bible is a multimillion dollar industry for the state with many top Bible publishers headquartered in Nashville, including Thomas Nelson, Gideons International, and United Methodist Publishing House; and

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WHEREAS, in June of 2014, Thomas Nelson was purchased by a private investment firm for almost half a billion dollars; and

WHEREAS, even the *Los Angeles Times* has acknowledged the economic impact of the Bible in Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, designating the Holy Bible as the official state book is in keeping with the religious connotations reflected in other state symbols and songs; and

WHEREAS, the tulip poplar was chosen as the state tree because, according to the *Blue Book*, "it grows from one end of the state to the other" and was "extensively used by the pioneers of the state" for practical purposes such as the construction of "houses, barns, and other necessary farm buildings", similar to how the Holy Bible is found in homes across the state and has been "used" for practical purposes such as recording family histories; and

WHEREAS, the state's "agricultural insect" is the honey-bee, which according to the *Blue Book*, "plays a vital economic role in Tennessee," even as does the printing and distribution of the Holy Bible in Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, the "passion flower" was chosen as the state wildflower even though, according to the *Blue Book*, its name came from "early Christian missionaries to South America, who saw in the various parts of the curiously constructed flower symbols of the Crucifixion – the three crosses, the crown of thorns, nails and chord"; and

WHEREAS, the "Coccinella 7," commonly called the ladybug or the ladybird beetle was chosen as a state insect, even though, according to the *Blue Book*, "this beetle was dedicated to the Virgin Mary and called the 'Beetle of our Lady'"; and

WHEREAS, two state songs, “My Tennessee” and “Tennessee” refer to our state’s natural beauty as having been “strewn” by “God’s ... lavish hand”, being a demonstration of “His wond’rous art” and evoking a “feeling its all God’s will”; and

WHEREAS, the state poem, “Oh Tennessee, My Tennessee,” includes these words:

“Strong Folks of Pioneer Descent,

Simple, Honest, and Reverent;” now, therefore,

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 4, Chapter 1, Part 3, is amended by adding the following language as a new section:

The Holy Bible is hereby designated as the official state book because of its cultural and historical significance.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.